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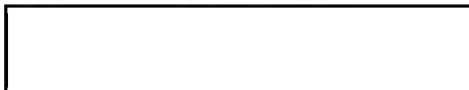


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Japan: Violent demonstrations by extremist students may force the relocation of a new US field hospital outside Tokyo.

The attackers, exploiting the Vietnam issue, have already caused damage to the US hospital and further incidents are likely. The students apparently view these demonstrations as a means of improving tactics, organization, and "political consciousness" in preparation for a major campaign against the US-Japanese security treaty in 1970. Recent excesses, however, have apparently lost the students some of the sympathy they had earlier enjoyed.

The demonstrations are forcing the Japanese Government publicly to retreat from its earlier private assurances on the US hospital. Although government representatives have told the US ambassador that it does not officially oppose the present location, top leaders have been widely quoted in the press as saying that the hospital would have to be moved from Tokyo.

The government faces elections for the upper house in early July and is trying to avoid controversial issues. It is being particularly cautious in handling problems related to Vietnam in view of current public anxiety and leftist-sponsored opposition to the war there.

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Military Position in Laos Remains Unchanged



Laos: The lull in the fighting continues, but Communist forces are still in position to resume their dry-season offensive with little warning.

In northern Laos, the Communists have not yet moved against the key government guerrilla bases at Na Khang and Muong Hiem, although they may well do so before the rainy season begins in late May. The capture of these bases would greatly impair the government's capability in the northeast, especially in view of other recent setbacks in this area.

The Communist push south of the Plaine des Jarres area has stalled, at least temporarily. Heavy truck traffic on Route 7 from North Vietnam in recent weeks, however, raises the possibility that Laotian forecasts of an impending offensive west of the Plaine may be somewhat more firmly based than they have been in past years.

In southern Laos, North Vietnamese troops are still dug in near the Bolovens Plateau, although there is no immediate threat to the provincial capitals of Saravane and Attapeu. Thus far, the North Vietnamese have refrained from attacking the two towns, although they could take them with relative ease, and have not pressed their offensive in the south. This lends weight to the view that the principal Communist objective in this area is to secure the infiltration corridor while a substantial movement of men and materiel takes place. [REDACTED]

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USSR: Soviet authorities have no intention of letting developments at home follow the path set in Czechoslovakia.

Soviet party boss Brezhnev made this clear yesterday in a speech which contained the harshest attack on political dissent heard from a politburo member in the post-Khrushchev era.

Speaking at a Moscow party meeting, he portrayed the dissent as the activity of groups of intellectuals and not merely isolated individuals, and warned that "renegades cannot expect impunity." His remarks place an official seal of approval on the current crack-down which has included the recent trials of dissidents, the police warnings to petition-signers, and the ouster of several intellectuals, including Ginzburg's defense attorney, from the Communist Party.

Brezhnev's remarks implied that there may be some unrest within the party over the course of Soviet policies. He accused critics of acting out of political expediency rather than from conviction. Although admitting the need for "principled" criticism, he said that "the Leninist directive on the need of iron party discipline" had not lost its relevance.

Brezhnev took a similarly stern view of the world in general. He emphasized the need for solidarity in the socialist world and hostility toward the capitalist world. His anxiety over trends in Eastern Europe was revealed in his charge that the West was relying on "nationalistic and revisionist elements" in an effort to weaken the Soviet bloc.

He said that a "deep economic crisis in the capitalist system is not ruled out" and criticized those in the USSR who underestimate Soviet achievements and overestimate those of the capitalist world. The second point, while ostensibly criticism of elements in the

Soviet scientific community, contrasts with the position taken by Premier Kosygin in a speech last month when he said that the USSR must be willing to learn from the scientific and technological progress of the West.

The more chauvinist attitude struck by Brezhnev seems to denote a shift of climate in Moscow, if not a divergence between the two leaders.

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Belgium: The divisive linguistic issue has dominated the campaign which ends with parliamentary elections on Sunday.

Belgium's two largest parties, former Prime Minister Vanden Boeynants' Social Christian Party and the Socialist Party, both have strong French- and Dutch-speaking factions. They will probably lose votes to the Liberals, the third largest party, and to the small parties. The Liberals, alone among the leading parties, have consistently appealed for national unity.

The Liberals and Socialists, either of which may be in the postelection government, advocate phasing out conscription. The Socialists also propose cuts in military spending and "re-examination" of NATO.

The life of the postelection government, which will almost certainly be a coalition, may be short given the discord over the linguistic problem. With its full attention focused on this problem, the new government probably will have little inclination to grapple with contentious foreign and defense policy issues.

[REDACTED]

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Guatemala: President Mendez has shifted several more experienced high-ranking army officers and dismissed the national police chief.

It is still not clear what prompted Mendez to make these bold moves. The new minister of defense, Colonel Chinchilla, is a popular [redacted] leader. Additional changes are likely, and Chinchilla may have difficulty in keeping top-level officers in line.

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NOTES

Panama: Panama City and other cities may face more disorder this weekend despite the government's ban on demonstrations. Several antigovernment marches are planned by Arias' National Union, and hoodlum elements might try to exploit them as they did in Panama City Thursday night. No major political developments are expected until the Supreme Court reconvenes on Monday. [REDACTED]

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Lebanon: A crisis has developed between President Hilu and army commander Bustani over army interference in current parliamentary elections. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The army has arrested a number of its opponents among second-level political leaders. Hilu has ordered the army back to its barracks, but Bustani has been either unable or unwilling to comply. If there is a test of strength, Hilu might threaten to resign, or, alternatively, the army might try to force him out. In either case, a prolonged crisis could ensue. [REDACTED]

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Finland: The five-party coalition government formed by Social Democrat Prime Minister Koivisto is strong, and includes some of the country's most widely respected political figures. It may well prove to be stable. Koivisto's coalition, like its predecessor, includes two Communists and the leader of the Communists' political front. The new government has declared its desire for continued friendly relations with the USSR, and this theme will probably be reaffirmed during the upcoming formal visit of Finnish Socialists to Moscow. [REDACTED]

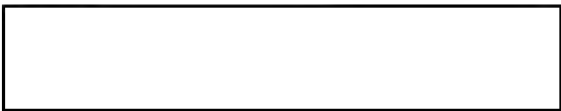
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